

In our time working together on important water and transportation issues, I saw firsthand Ruben's commitment to improving the quality of life for area residents. His immense passion and devotion for his hometown led him to create legislation to build the Peripheral Canal as well as to establish the California Conservation Corps. Through his commitment to public service, Ruben inspired hope for a better future for the next generation. Due to his remarkable service to Chino, a High School was named in his honor, as well as a park in Chino.

Ruben was preceded by the death of his wife, Irene in 2008. He is survived by his sons; Bud, Maurice, and Gary. He leaves with cherished memories a loving family of grandchildren and great-grandchildren. My thoughts and prayers, along with those of my wife, Barbara, and my children, Mayor pro tem Joe Baca Jr., Jeremy, Natalie, and Jennifer are with Ruben's family at this time. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today in honoring a beloved community member and tireless advocate, Ruben Ayala.

RECOGNIZING MR. KELVIN DASHUN BROWN FOR HIS DEDICATION AND SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 17, 2012

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable disabled individual, Mr. Kelvin Dashun Brown. Mr. Brown is a lifelong resident of the City of Mound Bayou in the Mississippi Delta.

He was born on September 21, 1977, with cerebral palsy and is a spastic quadriplegic. At birth his parents were told that he would not live beyond the age of two years old and if he did, he would be in a vegetative state.

Mr. Brown has proved the doctors incorrect. He started his education at the age of two at Delta House Child Development and the Bolivar County Demonstration Center in Cleveland, Mississippi. At the age of four, he was enrolled in the Mound Bayou Head Start Program. At the age of six, he was enrolled in the I.T. Montgomery Elementary School. Upon completing his education there, he enrolled at John F. Kennedy High School, where he remained until graduating in May of 1997. While a student at John F. Kennedy High School, he was a member of the Student Council and served as class representative and was elected vice-president during his junior year.

Mr. Brown worked for the City of Mound Bayou Police for eight years as a certified dispatcher and was promoted to Sergeant. Serving as Volunteer Youth Activities Coordinator for the City of Mound Bayou Police for the past seven years, he has coordinated and raised funds for annual back-to-school giveaways of school supplies, cookouts, toy drives, and monthly story hours for youths. He has held numerous preventative activities at the local school districts in the City of Mound Bayou and the City of Shelby to forge relationships with local school districts, youths and local police departments. Mr. Brown has received many accolades and awards for his youth and community endeavors.

He is an active member of Mount Olive Missionary Baptist Church, where he serves with the Usher Ministry.

Mr. Brown is the oldest son of Eugene Brown and Joann Brown. He lives his life by this motto: "It is what it is". In other words, his condition cannot stop him from being an asset to society.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mr. Kelvin Dashun Brown for his dedication to serving his community and youths in the Mississippi Delta.

HONORING UNITED STATES ARMY
SERGEANT BRIAN LEONHARDT

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 17, 2012

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with immense gratitude and deep sadness that I wish to commend United States Army Sergeant Brian Leonhardt for his bravery and his willingness to fight for his country. Sergeant Leonhardt, a member of the Indiana National Guard assigned to the 713th Engineer Company, 81st Troop Command out of Valparaiso, Indiana, was killed in the Kandahar Province of Afghanistan, along with three other members of the Indiana National Guard, when their vehicle struck an improvised explosive device on Friday, January 6, 2012. The sacrifice of Sergeant Leonhardt, as well as that of his fellow Guard members, will be forever remembered by those they fought to protect.

Born in Crown Point, Indiana and a resident of Merrillville, Indiana, Brian graduated from Hammond Baptist High School in Hammond, Indiana. Friends and family remember him as an athlete who loved to play basketball and an avid fan of the Miami Heat. A man of faith, Brian attended services at First Baptist Church of Hammond.

After his graduation, Brian joined the Indiana Army National Guard and completed his basic training and advanced individual training at Fort Leonard Wood, where he was recognized as the honor graduate of his class. One of eight children, it is evident that Brian was raised with a deep sense of patriotism. In fact, three of his brothers are also military veterans. For Sergeant Leonhardt's unwavering love for his country, as well as his extraordinary skill and commitment as a member of the Indiana National Guard, he received numerous military awards and honors.

Sergeant Leonhardt leaves behind a loving family that will forever cherish his memory. He is survived by his devoted wife Dianne, adoring parents Marie and Robert, brothers Charles, Randall, Robert III, Anthony, and Trevor, and sisters Theresa and Jacqueline. He also leaves behind many other friends and family members, as well as a saddened but proud community and a grateful nation. While the loss of Sergeant Leonhardt is a tremendous tragedy, and there is much sadness for a brilliant future cut far too short, the impact he has had on his family, friends, and community will leave a lasting impression.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in honoring a fallen hero, United States Army Sergeant Brian Leonhardt. Sergeant Leonhardt sacrificed his life in service to his

country, and his passing serves as an unfortunate, yet all too familiar reminder of the realities of war. Sergeant Leonhardt will forever remain a hero in the eyes of his family, his community, and his country. Thus, let us never forget the sacrifice he made to preserve the ideals of freedom and democracy.

RICHARD L. MAHACEK

HON. DENNIS A. CARDOZA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 17, 2012

Mr. CARDOZA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Richard Mahacek in the event of his retirement after four decades of service with Merced County and the University of California, Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources Cooperative Extension.

Richard began his youth development career in 1975 in the California Counties of Sonoma, Napa and San Benito as a 4-H Assistant implementing youth programs. Richard then moved on to Merced County where he became responsible for the development, implementation and evaluation of 4-H educational programs as the 4-H Youth Development Advisor. He has continued in this assignment for over 35 years. In 2005, he also assumed the role of Merced County Director for all Cooperative Extension programs.

In addition to his work with Merced County, Richard became the California statewide 4-H contact for Mechanical Science/Engineering project areas beginning in 1995. Richard's involvement and direction for the Mechanical Sciences and Engineering projects stems from his interest, degrees and credentials in Industrial Arts and Technology. His curiosity in technology was fostered in his youth by participating in electrical, woodworking and safety projects as a 4-H member in Sonoma County. His work over the years has included development of curriculum and activities in science processes, robotics, computers, GIS/GPS, biosecurity, and environmental issues such as watersheds and wildlife habitats. He has provided numerous workshops and training sessions on science processes, inquiry and experiential learning as implemented through various 4-H curricula locally, statewide and nationally.

Richard has partnered with other groups to extend technology programs including the California Girls Collaborative, Challenger Learning Centers, Merced County Office of Education, the California Division of Recycling, 4-H/Military Kids program, Society of Women Engineers, 21st Century Community Learning Centers and state supported after school programs. He serves on the executive board of the Challenger Learning Center of the San Joaquin Valley and is a member of the California Industrial and Technology Education Association and the International Technology and Engineering Educators Association.

Richard has been married to his beautiful wife Susan for over 32 years. Together they have three grown children. Their son Mark works for an office of education working in computer networking and technology support and his wife Marissa is a teacher in Planada. Paul is a mechanical engineer who is working on an ocean acidification research project in the South of France and his wife Lindsay is an